

Can Healthy Foods Improve Your Mood?

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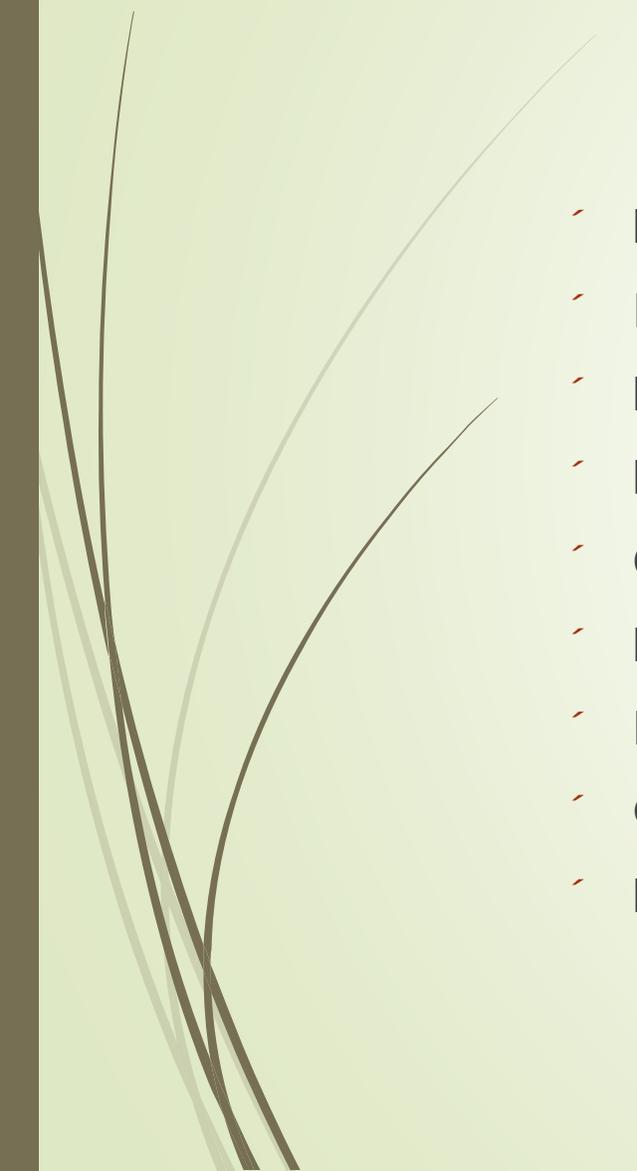


Research – Nutrition & Mental Health

- Emerging
 - Mood influenced by many factors
 - Stress
 - Environment
 - Poor sleep
 - Genetics
 - Mood disorders
 - Nutritional deficiencies
- Difficult to accurately determine if food can raise spirits
 - Certain foods have been shown to improve brain health & certain mood disorders



9 Healthy Foods May Boost Your Mood

- ✓ Fatty Fish with Omega-3 Fatty Acids
 - ✓ Dark Chocolate
 - ✓ Fermented Foods
 - ✓ Bananas
 - ✓ Oats
 - ✓ Berries
 - ✓ Nuts & Seed
 - ✓ Coffee
 - ✓ Beans & Lentils
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Fatty Fish



- ✓ Omega-3s Fatty Acids (DHA & EPA)
 - ✓ Fluidity of the brain cell membrane
 - ✓ Play key role in brain development & cell signaling
- ✓ Research mixed
 - ✓ Omega-3s in fish oil
 - ✓ Lower depression scores
- ✓ Recommended Amount:
 - ✓ 3.5 oz salmon = 2,260 mg DHA & EPA
 - ✓ Eat fish 2 times/week
 - ✓ May lower your risk of depression
- ✓ Fish Oil =

Dark Chocolate



- Rich in many mood-boosting compounds
 - Sugar – quick source of food for brain
 - Not sure if it is enough of healthy compounds for psychological response
 - Caffeine, theobromine & a cannabinoids-like compound (linked to improved mood)
- High in health-promoting flavonoids
 - Increase blood flow to brain
 - Reduce inflammation
 - Boost brain health

→ May support mood regulation
- Chocolate - high hedonic rating (pleasurable, tastes, texture & smell)
 - May also promote good mood
- Dark chocolate
 - Higher in flavonoids & lower in sugar
 - 1-2 small squares (70% or more cocoa solids)



Fermented Foods

- Kimchi, yogurt, kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut
 - May improve gut health & mood
 - Fermentation process - live bacteria convert sugar to alcohol & acids
 - Rich in probiotics
 - Encourages growth of healthy bacteria in gut
 - May increase serotonin levels:
 - Neurotransmitter – affects human behavior
 - Mood, stress response, appetite
 - 90% produced by gut microbiome (healthy of healthy bacteria in your gut)
- Some fermented foods nor significant source of probiotics
 - Beer, some breads, & wine – due to cooking & filtering



Bananas

- ✓ High in vitamin B6
 - ✓ Synthesize feel-good neurotransmitters
 - ✓ Dopamine & serotonin
 - ✓ 16 gm sugar & 3.5 gm fiber
 - ✓ Paired with fiber, sugar released slowly into bloodstream = stable blood sugar levels & better mood control
 - ✓ Low blood sugar = irritability & mood swings
 - ✓ When there is still some green showing on the peel, bananas are excellent source of prebiotics (type of fiber) feeds healthy bacteria in gut
 - ✓ Robust gut microbiome associated with lower rates of mood disorders

Oats



- ✓ Excellent source of fiber
 - ✓ Slows carb digestion = slow release of glucose into bloodstream leading – keeps energy levels stable
- ✓ One study - 1.5 -6 g fiber @ breakfast reported better moods & energy levels
 - ✓ More stable blood sugar levels -
 - ✓ Important to controlling mood swings & irritability
- ✓ Oats – great source of iron
 - ✓ Iron deficiency anemia (IDA) – most common nutritional deficiency
 - ✓ Fatigue, sluggishness, & mood disorders with (IDA)
 - ✓ *More study needed*

Berries



- ✓ Eating more fruits & vegetables
Linked to lower rates of depression
 - ✓ Mechanism not clear – diet rich in antioxidants helps manage inflammation associated with depression & other mood disorders
- ✓ Berries
 - ✓ Wide range of antioxidants & phenolic compounds – role in combatting oxidative stress - imbalance of harmful compounds in body
 - ✓ High in anthocyanin – purple-blue color
 - ✓ One study diet rich 39% lower risk of depression symptoms

Nuts & Seeds

- High in plant-based proteins, healthy fat & fiber
 - Tryptophan (amino acid role in producing mood-boosting serotonin)
 - Almonds, cashews, peanuts, walnuts
 - Pumpkin, sesame & sunflower seeds
- Huge component of MIND and Mediterranean diets
 - May support a healthy brain
 - Diets promotes fresh, whole foods and limits your intake of processed items
- 10-year study in 15,980 people linked moderate nut intake to a 23% lower risk of depression
- Certain nuts and seed - good sources of zinc and selenium (Brazil nuts, almonds, and pine nuts)
 - Deficiency in these minerals, which are important for brain function, is associated with higher rates of depression — **although more research is needed**



Coffee

- World's most popular drink
 - Caffeine prevents naturally occurring compound called adenosine from attaching to brain receptors that promote tiredness, therefore increasing alertness and attention
- Increases the release of mood-boosting neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and norepinephrine
- Study (72 people)- both caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee
 - Significantly improved mood compared to placebo beverage
 - Suggests coffee contains other compounds that influence mood
- Researchers attributed this boost in attitude to various phenolic compounds, such as chlorogenic acid - *more research is needed*



Beans & Lentils

- ✓ High in fiber and plant-based protein
- ✓ Beans & lentils - full of feel-good nutrients
 - ✓ Excellent source of B vitamins
 - ✓ Help improve mood by increasing levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, and gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA)
 - ✓ All important for regulating mood
- ✓ B vitamins - key role in nerve signaling, proper communication between nerve cells
 - ✓ Low levels of these vitamins, especially B12 and folate, have been linked to mood disorders, such as depression
- ✓ Good source of zinc, magnesium, selenium, and non-heme iron
 - ✓ May likewise elevate your spirits



Brain & Body Healthy Foods:

- Dark green leafy vegetables
 - Collards, turnip, mustard
- Walnuts
- Olive oil
- Eggs
- Herbs & Spices:
 - Turmeric, garlic, ginger, cardamon, black & red pepper, rosemary, cinnamon

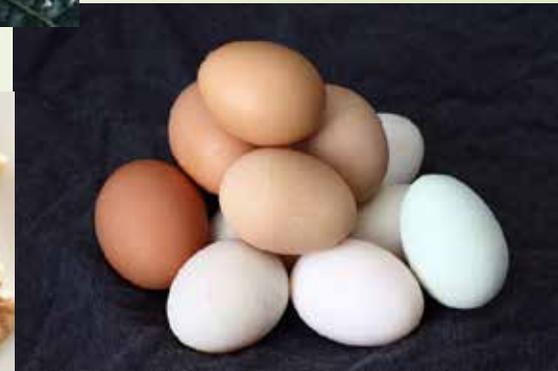
Cruciferous Vegetable:

Arugula, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, radishes, turnips

Folate, vitamins C, E, and K, and fiber

Avocados

Green Tea



- When feeling blue, you may crave calorie-rich, high sugar foods like ice cream or cookies to try to lift your spirits.
 - Might give you a sugar rush, unlikely to help you in the long term &and may have negative consequences as well.
- Aim for wholesome foods that have been shown to not only boost your mood but also your overall health
- Try out some of the foods above to kick-start your positivity routine.

Summary:

Chocolate Avocado Pudding

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Serving: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 large ripe avocados, peeled & cut into cubes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup, honey, agave or brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup almond milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- Pinch sea salt
- Raspberries, sliced almonds & mint for garnish (optional)

How to make it:

Step 1

Blend all ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth.

Step 2

Refrigerator and chill for about 30

Step 3

Garnish with raspberries, almonds and mint, if desired.

Tips & Recipe Variations:

Use soy, rice or another milk of your choice to make the pudding

You can eat pudding right after blending the ingredient together, but the best flavor is after you chill it!

Leaving the salt out lowers the sodium to 12 mg.

Nutrition Information: Calories 251, Fat 21 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 51 mg, Carbohydrate 19 g, Fiber 10 g, Protein 4 g